

Effective From 01 April 2026

Funding Strategy Statement

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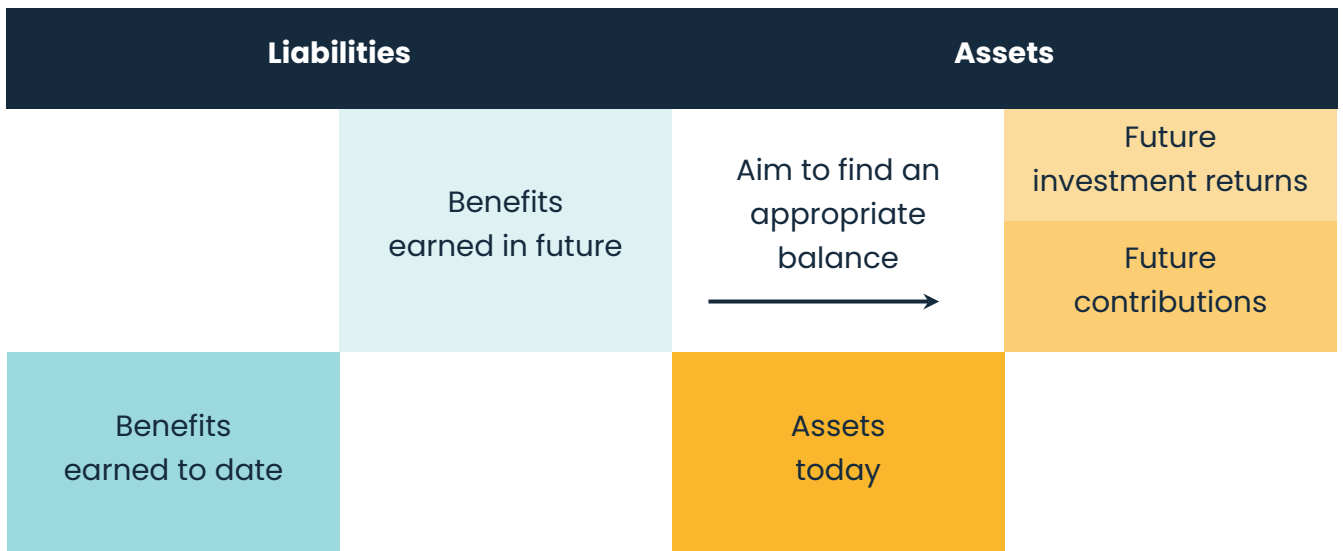
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BACKGROUND

THE PURPOSE OF THE FUNDING STRATEGY

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a funded pension scheme, with employee benefits guaranteed by the LGPS Regulations. Benefits to members and their dependents now, and in the future (liabilities) are funded through a combination of employee contributions (fixed nationally), investment returns and employer contributions.

The extent to which liabilities are funded through contributions versus investments is a key decision. This is illustrated below.



The strategy describes:



Funding targets

The funding target affects how much the Pension Fund needs to hold now to provide members' pensions in the future and is adjusted to reflect employer characteristics.



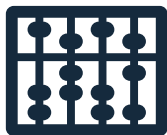
Time horizons to meet the funding target

The time horizon over which an employer is required to meet their funding target will depend on how long they are likely to participate in the Scheme.



Likelihoods of meeting the funding target

The Fund applies likelihoods for an employer to return a funding position of 100% when they reach the end of their time horizon depending on the nature and security of an employer.



Smoothing

Smoothing of employer contribution rates to achieve stability can be done through (for example) capping or phasing contribution rate changes, extending time horizons or pooling employers.



Target rate

The Fund targets a stable and sustainable contribution rate for employers meeting certain characteristics which it aims to maintain for the long term (20+ years). The overarching objective is to give budgeting certainty to long-term, secure employers.

VALUE OF MEMBER BENEFITS

SETTING THE FUNDING TARGET

The Pension Fund needs to ensure that the assets held on behalf of each employer meet (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up to date for the employer's employees and ex-employees (the liabilities) i.e. a funding position of 100%.

To place a value on these future and past service benefits (the liabilities) the Actuary will make both financial and demographic assumptions about the future. The assumptions are set out below:

Consistent approach across all employers ¹

- salary growth
- pension increases
- life expectancy
- probabilities of ill-health early retirement
- proportions of member deaths giving rise to dependents' benefits

Dependent on employer type

- anticipated future investment returns

The funding target is then set by combining all the underlying assumptions.

The funding target affects how much the Fund needs to hold now to provide members' pensions in the future and is adjusted to reflect employer characteristics.

The funding target is based on different assumptions depending on the type of employer and their level of risk.

The more cautious "cessation basis" assumes a higher level of certainty so higher liability values and higher employer costs. It gives at least 95% chance that the investment strategy in place to deliver the return assumption over 20 years.

This approach is appropriate for higher risk, shorter term or exiting employers where market movements could impact short term funding levels. It means that the Fund needs to hold more money now to ensure it can provide member pension benefits in the future, because it cannot rely on investment returns to make up any funding gap.

However, the "ongoing funding basis" is more optimistic. It assumes a lower liability value and lower employer costs as it requires that there is at least a 75% chance of the

¹ Although tailored to underlying membership of employer

investment strategy delivering the return assumption over 20 years. This is used for secure, longer-term employers because, over time, the Fund has more certainty that investment returns can make up a funding gap.

For employers that are approaching the end of their participation in the Fund (i.e. more than four years away), a phased approach may be used to gradually move from the ongoing to the cessation basis.

The funding target for each type of employer is set out in Appendix 1. A summary of the assumptions applied are shown in Appendix 3.

ASSETS AND FUTURE RETURNS

THE ROLE OF ASSETS TO DELIVER THE FUNDING STRATEGY

Funding and investment strategies are closely linked – the Pension Fund must be able to pay benefits when they are due. The more that assets can be relied on through asset returns and income, the better able the Pension Fund is to keep employer contributions affordable and stable.

The summary below highlights the key features of the investment strategy and how they support the Funding Strategy Statement. The strategy is designed to strike the right balance – to generate future returns to keep contribution rates affordable, whilst also maintaining predictable returns, reducing the need to set higher contributions from employers to ensure benefits can be paid.

	Asset Class	Funding Requirement / Return	Strategic Asset Allocation
Growth	Listed Equity	8.3%	45%
	Private Equity	9.9%	5%
Income	Private Credit	8.8%	5%
	Property	7.3%	10%
	Infrastructure	8.3%	5%
Protection	Credit ¹	6.5%	30%
Total		7.8%	100%

More detail is available in the dedicated Investment Strategy Statement document.

Notes

1. Including credit instruments of investment grade quality, including (but not limited to) corporate bonds and non-UK government bonds.

EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS

EMPLOYEES PAY A SHARE OF THE COST

Employee contributions are fixed nationally and are tiered based on member's pensionable pay.

The average employee contribution rate across all employers on 31 March 2025 is 6.5% of pay (6.6% at 31 March 2022). This is used by the Actuary as Employer contributions are the balance of the cost after netting off employee contributions.

Up to date employee contributions can be found on the LGPS member website.

EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

THE BALANCING PAYMENT

The balance of cost between the value of member benefits, the returns on investments and employee contributions is paid for through employer contributions. Employer contributions are set locally by the Fund Actuary.

Employer contributions are normally made up of two elements:

- **Primary Rate:** The estimated cost of new benefits being earned by members year to year, after deducting member's contributions and adding an allowance for administration expenses.
- **Secondary Rate:** Any adjustment to the primary rate to reflect the individual circumstances of each employer, to meet the Fund's desire for stable contribution rates, and to recover any difference between the assets built up to date and the value of past service benefits.

As with the "funding target", employer contribution rates depend on employer characteristics. These characteristics determine the period over which the employers funding target should be met, and the certainty required that an employer will achieve their funding target. The arrangements for each type of employer are set out in Appendix 1.

Time Horizon

An "employer time horizon" is the period an employer expects to remain in the Pension Fund or to employ active members. Contributions are therefore set to meet each employer's funding target by the end of their respective time horizon.

Employers may be given a lower time horizon if they have a less permanent anticipated membership, they are approaching the end of their participation in the Pension Fund, or they do not have a known funding source to afford increased contributions if investment returns under-perform.

The longest time horizon afforded any employer in the Fund is 20 years (generally reserved for long term employers with reliable funding sources).

Likelihood of meeting the funding target

It is extremely unlikely that any contribution rate will guarantee a funding position of 100% when an employer reaches the end of their time horizon. To reflect this, the Pension Fund applies different likelihoods depending on the nature and financial security of an employer.

Typically, a higher required likelihood (for employers with less permanent anticipated membership, those approaching the end of their participation or those who do not have a guarantor) usually means higher contribution rates.

Employers who are open to new entrants and receive the majority of their income through precept are considered to be long term and a lower likelihood may be appropriate.

In general, the Pension Fund will require all long-term employers to have at least a 66% chance of being fully funded by the end of their time horizon.

Smoothing

To help contribution rates stay stable, the Pension Fund may, at its absolute discretion, apply smoothing measures for employers who are relatively low risk or who provide sufficient financial security.

This can be done through:

- capping contribution rate changes (stabilisation),
- phasing contribution changes,
- extending time horizons (maximum applied is 20 years),
- pooling employers, or
- limiting circumstances where negative secondary rates might apply.

However, these smoothing measures can 'hide' the true contribution rates. Employers should be aware that they will still be expected to fund their own long-term liability (i.e. the actual eventual cost of benefits payable to their employees and ex-employees) and paying a smoothed rate in the short term may impact on the return on an employer's assets meaning it takes longer to reach full funding, or that in the short term the employer may be paying more than necessary to reach full funding, all other things being equal.

Target Rate

For most employers, a long-term target rate has been set at 15% of pay, although it should be noted that employers targeting 15% may reach this level over different periods of time.

This rate has been set at a level such that there is a 10% or less chance of the Fund needing to amend the target rate at the next formal valuation of the Fund.

Once 15% is reached, the Fund aims to maintain this rate for the long term (20+ years). The overarching objective is to give budgeting certainty to long-term, secure employers.

The Fund will utilise other funding levers to maintain this rate at future valuations including adjusting the level of investment risk it takes and/or the level of risk/prudence it will tolerate within funding plans for employers.

The adoption of this rate may mean employers over or underpay in the shorter term.

ADJUSTED CONTRIBUTIONS

POTENTIAL CHANGES BETWEEN VALUATIONS

The rate certified by the Fund Actuary as part of the valuation is normally the minimum employer contribution due for the next three years – or until the next valuation. However, there are limited circumstances where this may be adjusted.

In certain scenarios an employer's contribution rate may be adjusted outside the actuarial valuation process as set out below.

Decision to pay more

Employers can opt to pay contributions at a higher rate if they choose to. This will be considered by the Actuary at subsequent valuations.

Additional payment to cover strain cost

Some employers are required to make an upfront payment of strain charges – this is when an employee retires before reaching Normal Retirement Age (including ill health early retirements).

This is covered in more detail in the following section.

Additional pension contributions (APCs)

Employers may choose to exercise several discretions which might require additional contributions such as shared cost APCs.

Revision due to significant change to the liabilities or liabilities arising

Employer contribution rates may be amended by the Pension Fund between valuations for any significant change to the liabilities or a of an employer. Significant changes are:

- when it is likely that the employer will become an exiting employer,
- the employer has incurred costs following an award of additional pension,²
- there are changes to the LGPS benefit structure,
- membership has changed significantly since the last valuation, or
- where an employer has failed to pay contributions.

² [regulation 31\(3\) of the LGPS regulations 2013](#)

Revision due to a significant change in ability to meet obligations.

Employer contribution rates may be amended by the Pension Fund between valuations for any “significant change” in an employer’s ability to meet its obligations. Significant changes are considered to be:

- a failure to maintain any bond, indemnity or contingent asset, or
- a deterioration in employer covenant as advised by the Fund’s covenant advisors.

As set out in both Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) guidance, local authorities and other tax-backed employers are generally not subject to changes in covenant.

Requested revision

An employer may request a review of contributions between valuations, provided they set out their reasoning and they cover all costs incurred by the Pension Fund in relation to their request.

Market volatility and changes to asset values will not be considered for a change in contributions outside a formal valuation, unless an employer is nearing cessation, or is subject to a material transfer of liabilities.

It should be noted that any review may require increased contributions.

Pre-payment adjustment

Some employers may choose to make an advance or lump sum payment of their employer contributions either at the start of a financial year or valuation period.

In these cases, a contribution rate adjustment may apply to reflect appropriate actuarial discounts (as detailed in the Rates and Adjustment Certificate).

Employers adopting this approach should be aware of the risks involved, particularly the impact of investment returns during the inter-valuation period.

Any pre-payment arrangement is subject to approval by the Pension Fund, Actuary, employer and their auditors.

UPFRONT STRAIN CHARGES

EXTRA COSTS PAYABLE BY EMPLOYERS

In some circumstances members are entitled to early payment of their retirement benefits. To manage the impact that this may have on employer liabilities, strain cost charges may be required from the employer.

Employer strain cost charges may be made by the Pension Fund in the event of early retirement – whether a result of redundancy, flexible retirement or ill health.

Early retirement strain factors are determined by the Fund Actuary and are used by the Pension Fund when calculating early retirement strain costs (including when an employer agrees to flexible retirement). The Pension Fund's approach is to review factors at each valuation for consistency with the assumptions set out in the Funding Strategy Statement.

The strain cost calculations make allowance for:

- Any uplift to a member's pension (in cases of ill health).
- The earlier start date for the payment of benefits, and therefore the longer expected payment period.
- The contributions and investment returns missed, as funds have been applied to pay early benefits rather than retained and invested.

This helps manage the cost of membership experience within an employer's funding position and links to the objective of maintaining stabilised, target, contribution rates.

Redundancy

Members over 55 (over 57 from 5 April 2028) are entitled to receive unreduced pension benefits if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency. The eligibility for an early retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations.

For all employers, where a member retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age, the employer is required to pay an upfront additional contribution (strain).

An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to consider any exceptions (such as spreading the payment over a set period).

Ill health

Members (at any age) are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill health or infirmity of mind or body before the member reaches normal pension age. The

eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out in the LGPS regulations. Any decision made by an employer should be on the opinion of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner and other relevant evidence.

For Local Authorities (County, District and Borough Councils), non-uniformed Police, academies and colleges and pass-through admitted bodies where a member retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age this will be considered a Membership Experience item by the Fund Actuary at the next valuation.

This means the impacted employer will see a reduction to their surplus / increase in their deficit all other things being equal which would then be recovered through normal employer contributions in the future.

However, if preferred, an upfront additional contribution (also known as a strain contribution) can be paid to the Pension Fund by the employer.

For city, town and parish councils, other scheduled bodies and stand-alone admitted bodies, where a member retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age, the preference is for the employer to pay an upfront additional contribution (strain).

Alternatives will be considered based on the employer's covenant.

Employers can take out insurance to protect themselves against the strain.

Flexible Retirement

Flexible retirement is a way that members can move gradually into retirement by reducing their hours or moving to a less senior position and taking some or all the pension benefits they have built up.

Any pension strain resulting from the flexible retirement will be charged to the employer.

EXITING EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYERS LEAVING THE SCHEME

The Pension Fund seeks to manage employer funding positions and contribution rates based on the period over which they are actively participating in the Pension Fund. However, when an employer exits the Pension Fund will instruct the Fund Actuary to undertake an actuarial assessment of the assets and liabilities at the exit date.

An employer may exit the Pension Fund because it no longer has active members participating, it becomes insolvent, is wound up, is liquidated or it breaches its obligations under the Admission Agreement (if relevant).

Full details on how each employer's position on exit is determined are set out in Appendix 1.

Partial Terminations

The Pension Fund does not permit "partial termination" unless this is carried out within the bounds of the Regulations and the Pension Fund's admissions policy.

Suspension Notice

In some circumstances, a Suspension Notice may be put in place (at the discretion of the Fund) to defer an exit debt for up to three years. In this case, the employer is expected to acquire one or more active members in the Fund over the period.

It should be made clear that the employer may be required to pay secondary contributions during the period of the Suspension Notice.

If the Suspension Notice lapses and the employer has not acquired one or more active members in the Pension Fund, then an exit debt may become payable.

Cessation Valuation

When an employer exits, the Pension Fund will instruct the Actuary to carry out a cessation valuation. This will determine whether there is any deficit or surplus in respect of the exiting employer's current and former employees.

The approach adopted will look to protect other employers in the Pension Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future and take into account future funding sources, guarantees or pooling arrangements.

The Fund Actuary's valuation will either certify an exit debt (deficit) or an excess of assets in relation to the employer's liabilities (surplus).

Full details on how each employer's position on exit is determined are set out in Appendix 1.

Exit debt (deficit)

Where there is a deficit, the normal approach is for payment of this amount in full as a single lump sum payment from the exiting employer or their guarantor.

If this is not possible, there are two options which can be considered by the Fund – a deferred debt agreement or a payment plan.

- **Deferred debt agreement:** An employer may defer their obligations to make an exit payment and continue to make secondary contributions that have been set by the Fund Actuary. This will be considered at an employer's request provided they are expected to be a going concern and have a sufficient covenant (or security). It should be noted that the employer will remain exposed to all pension risks until final settlement is made. Employer's requesting a deferred debt agreement must meet the Fund's costs associated with considering, entering and monitoring the agreement. A deferred debt agreement will cease when the employer is full funded on their Exit Basis.
- **Payment plan:** An employer may be allowed to repay their outstanding obligations to the Pension Fund through regular payments over an appropriate period, which can be no longer than three years. This must be supported by suitable security (bond, indemnity or guarantee). It should be noted that the employer's deficit is crystallised at their exit date and therefore they are not exposed to any pension risks during the repayment period. At the Pension Fund's discretion, interest at the discount rate used to value the liabilities in the cessation valuation will apply.

Any unpaid amounts will fall to any related scheme employer (for admission bodies) or multi-academy trust (for academies).

Where there is no related scheme employer or multi-academy trust, any unpaid amounts will be shared amongst all the other employers in the Pension Fund.

This may require an immediate revision to the Rates and Adjustments Certificate affecting other employers in the Pension Fund or instead be reflected in the contribution rates set at the next formal valuation following the exit date.

Exit Credit (Surplus)

Where there is a surplus, the Pension Fund will determine, at its absolute discretion, the amount of any exit credit payment due, having regard to any relevant considerations. The following are considered relevant:

- The extent to which there is an excess of assets in the Pension Fund over the employer's liabilities.
- The proportion of excess assets which has arisen because of the value of the employer's contributions.
- Any representations made to the Pension Fund by the exiting employer, the scheme employer in connection with that body and (where the employer is an admission body) any of the following:
 - a person who funds the admission body in whole or in part, the connected scheme employer,
 - a person who owns, or controls the exercise of the functions of the admission body, and
 - the Secretary of State but only in the case of specific admission bodies (such as those established by or under any enactment).
- Any other relevant factors which may include:
 - the date that the employer joined the Pension Fund,
 - the level of pensions risk the employer has taken on during its period of participation (including pooling arrangements the employer has benefited from),
 - any agreements on the treatment of the employer on exit, and/or
 - whether there are any outstanding sums owed to the Pension Fund.

The Executive Director of Finance and Support Services, per the County Council's Constitution, will determine the payment amount. The reasons for the decision will also be documented.

If an exit credit is determined to be payable, it must be paid within six months of the date on which the employer ceased to participate in the Fund. It can be over a longer time if both the Pension Fund and exiting employer agree. An employer is assumed to have agreed to an extension to the six months where notification of exit is late, employee notifications have not been received or where the employer has not provided relevant paperwork allowing the Fund to carry out a determination.

Once the exit credit has been paid, no further payments are due from the Authority to the exiting employer in respect of the surplus.

If there is a dispute or disagreement about the amount of any exit credit paid, or about how it was assessed, the appeals and adjudication provisions set out in Regulations 74-78 of the Regulations would apply. If the internal dispute resolution process is unsuccessful, the Pensions Ombudsman also has jurisdiction to hear complaints of maladministration against LGPS administering authorities.

Employers with no remaining active members

When an employer ceases their participation in the Pension Fund, and their exit obligations are met, they will have no further obligations. However, as member benefits are guaranteed, it is expected that one of two situations will eventually arise:

- The employer's asset share runs out before all its ex-employees' benefits have been paid. In this situation, the other employers participating in the Pension Fund will be required to contribute to pay all remaining benefits by apportioning the remaining liabilities on a pro-rata basis at successive formal valuations; or
- The last ex-employee or dependant dies before the employer's asset share has been fully utilised. In this situation, the remaining assets would be apportioned pro-rata by the Fund Actuary to the other employers participating in the Pension Fund at successive formal valuations.

BULK TRANSFERS

GROUP TRANSFERS OUT OF THE FUND

Bulk transfers take place where ten or more members transfer to another LGPS fund, or when two or more members transfer to a non-LGPS fund.

A bulk transfer involves a group of employees changing to a new employer in a different Fund or moving along with their existing employer to a new Fund. It is usually triggered by a contract being transferred, a service being restructured, or a merger or acquisition involving an LGPS employer.

Each bulk transfer is treated on a case-by-case basis. However, in general, where active members are transferring out, the Fund will pay bulk transfers in line with factors provided by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) for individual transfers. An allowance will also be made for known fund returns between the transfer date and payment date. This approach also sets the minimum amount the Fund will accept on a transfer in.

The Fund reserves the right to use a different approach if an Employer has an 'exit event' because of the bulk transfer.

For transfers involving deferred or pensioner members (such as when employers in different funds merge) the Fund will transfer the asset share linked to the transferring members, again including an allowance for known fund returns between the transfer date and payment date. This also sets the minimum amount the Fund will accept on a transfer in.

The Fund may permit a shortfall to arise on a bulk transfer if the employer participating in the Fund has a strong covenant and commits to meeting that shortfall in an appropriate period. This may result in the employer's contributions increasing between valuations. If the shortfall is not met, the Fund may require a higher transfer amount or immediate contribution from the employer(s) involved.

APPENDIX 1A: FUNDING STRATEGY SCHEDULED BODIES

The table below set out how the Funding Strategy is applied to scheduled bodies.

	Local Authority / Police	Academies	Colleges	City, Town and Parish Councils	Other Scheduled Bodies
General	Open, long term and tax raising	Open, long term (with reliable funding) and government guarantee	Open, long term and government guarantee	Open and long term	Open
Opening Position	Case by case Individual rate	Share of assets and liabilities from West Sussex County Council	Case by case Individual rate	Case by case but usually no assets or liabilities	Case by case Individual rate
Max Time Horizon	20 years	20 years	20 years	20 years	Future working lifetime (subject to max 20 years)
Min Likelihood	66%	66%	66%	66%	70%
Funding Target	Ongoing basis	Ongoing basis	Ongoing basis	Ongoing basis	Ongoing basis

	Local Authority / Police	Academies	Colleges	City, Town and Parish Councils	Other Scheduled Bodies
Smoothing	Stabilisation Phasing in rate changes in limited circumstances	Pooling and Stabilisation Phasing in rate changes in limited circumstances	Stabilisation Phasing in rate changes in limited circumstances	Pooling (default) Phasing in rate changes or target rate in limited circumstances.	Phasing in rate changes or target rate in limited circumstances
Target rate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exit Basis	Cessation basis	Cessation basis	Cessation basis	Cessation basis	Cessation basis
Suspension Notice	Considered	Considered	Considered	Considered	Considered
Exit Payment Terms (Deficit)	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement
Ill Health	Membership experience item (default) or upfront, additional contribution ('strain')	Membership experience item (default) or upfront, additional contribution ('strain')	Membership experience item (default) or upfront, additional contribution ('strain')	Preference for an upfront, additional contribution ('strain') but alternatives considered based on covenant.	Preference for an upfront additional contribution ('strain') but alternatives considered based on covenant.

APPENDIX 1B: FUNDING STRATEGY ADMITTED BODIES

The table below set out how the Funding Strategy is applied to admission bodies.

	Pass Through	Guarantor	No Guarantor
General	(Normally) closed, shorter term and no assets or liabilities	(Normally) closed, shorter term and related scheme employer guarantee	Shorter term
Opening Position	No assets or liabilities Letting authority rate unless otherwise agreed.	Normally fully funded on ongoing funding with individual rate unless otherwise agreed	Case by case Individual rate
Max Time Horizon	Same as letting authority	Shorter of future working lifetime or contract length (subject to max 20 years)	Shorter of future working lifetime or contract length (subject to max 20 years)
Min Likelihood	Same as letting authority	Same as letting authority	50%-75% dependent on Funding Target

	Pass Through	Guarantor	No Guarantor
Funding Target	Same as letting authority	Ongoing basis	Cessation basis / blended based on time horizon
Smoothing	None	None	None
Target rate	N/A	No	No
Exit Basis	No assets or liabilities	Ongoing basis	Cessation basis
Suspension Notice	N/A	Very limited	Very limited
Exit Payment Terms (Deficit)	N/A	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement	Lump sum (default), payment plan or deferred debt agreement
Ill Health Strain	Same as letting authority	Preference for an upfront, additional contribution. Alternatives considered based on covenant	Preference for an upfront, additional contribution. Alternatives considered based on covenant

APPENDIX 2A: LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE

Opening Position

Scheduled Bodies are listed in LGPS Regulations and therefore, it is unusual for new Scheduled Bodies, including Local Authorities or the Police, to join the Fund.

As these events are rare and tend to be unique in nature, there is no prescribed method for allocating an opening position. This would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

For any new Local Authority or the Police, the initial contribution rate is likely to be an individual rate calculated by the Fund Actuary.

Funding Target

The funding target for Local Authority and Police will be the ongoing funding basis.

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because Local Authorities and the Police are considered long term employers, the Fund will require a least a 66% minimum likelihood that the assets held on behalf of the Local Authorities and the Police meet (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100%) at the end of their time horizon. The maximum time horizon used will be 20 years.

Smoothing

The key principle for Local Authorities and the Police is the Fund's approach to stabilising contribution rates. "Stabilisation" is an approach which allows for short term volatility to be managed and keep employers' rates relatively stable. Provided there are no anticipated material events, annual increases or decreases in contribution rates restricted to 1% of pay. Phasing to new rates in increments greater than 1% may be permitted in limited circumstances.

Target Rate

The Fund will target a long-term sustainable contribution rate of 15% of pay. Employers who have a target rate and whose contribution rates have been "stabilised" may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid which hides the true long-term liability, and it may take longer to reach full funding, all other things being equal.

Pre-payment

Some Local Authorities or the Police may be allowed to make an advance / lump sum payment of employer contributions at the start of a financial year, or valuation period. In

these circumstances a contribution rate adjustment reflecting appropriate actuarial discounts may apply. However, employers adopting this approach should acknowledge the risks involved, particularly in respect of the impact of investment return during the inter-valuation period.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age. An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a maximum three year period, but this would be by exception.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. Wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age this will be considered as a Membership Experience item by the Fund Actuary at the next triennial valuation (e.g. the impacted employer will see a reduction in their surplus / increase in their deficit all else being equal which would then be recovered through normal employer contributions in future). However, an upfront, additional contribution ('strain') can be paid to the Fund by an employer if preferred.

Exit and Exit Obligations

The Fund considers a Local Authority and the Police to be long term employers. However, it is important to consider arrangements when a Local Authority or the Police leaves the Fund, for whatever reason.

Suspension Notice

It is not anticipated that circumstances would present to make a Suspension Notice viable. However, it will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Other circumstances

In all other cases, and if the employer does not have one or more active members actively participating in the Fund at the conclusion of a Suspension Notice, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine the level of deficit or surplus in the individual employer position.

Whenever completing this the Actuary will adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects other employers in the Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future.

Therefore, on exit, liabilities will be valued using the Fund's "cessation basis". The calculation may include an allowance for future administration costs, reserves for retrospective changes to Fund benefits, and/or additional prudence for the risk of members living longer than anticipated.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the Local Authority or Police may be permitted to make regular payments or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Contractors

Local Authorities and the Police should note the impact of setting up new Admission Bodies on their liabilities. It is normal for an Admission Body to be set up in the Fund as a new employer.

- The default position of the Fund is for a new employer to be set up on a "Pass Through" basis. Under most pass-through arrangements no pension fund assets or liabilities will transfer to the contractor's portion of the Fund. The contractor's initial contribution rate will be set based on the letting authority contribution rate on the date of admission and will be fixed for the duration of the admission, except if agreed otherwise between the letting authority and the Fund and the alternative arrangements are defined within the Admission Agreement. When the Admission Body exits the Fund, provided that all pass-through arrangements have been complied with, the Local Authority or Police will have responsibility for any future liabilities. These bodies will be pooled with the letting authority for actuarial valuation purposes.
- Alternatively, the new employer can have responsibility for all the accrued (and future) benefits of the transferring employees and if this is the case, the Admission Body will usually start fully funded on an ongoing funding basis. The contractor's initial contribution rate would be set on an individual basis by the Fund Actuary and the Local Authority or Police will carry out an assessment (taking account of actuarial advice) concerning the level of risk arising on the premature termination of the service or in the event of insolvency, winding up or liquidation. This risk assessment needs to be carried out to the satisfaction of the Fund and where required an indemnity or bond must be put in place to meet the level of risk. This should be reviewed periodically. When an Admission Body exits the Fund and it is not possible to obtain all or part of the exit payment due from the exiting Admission Body, or from an insurer, or any person providing an indemnity, bond or guarantee on their behalf, any unpaid amounts will fall to any related Fund employer.

APPENDIX 2B: ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOLS

Opening Position

All Academies will have an initial opening position which is based on:

- **Liabilities** reflecting the value of benefits built up by the transferring members of staff active in the Fund on the day before conversion. Ex-employees of the school who have deferred or pensioner status will not be included in these liabilities.
- **Assets** allocated from West Sussex County Council's assets in the Fund, using the estimated funding position of WSCC on the day of the conversion. The asset position for WSCC assumes that ex-employees of the school who have deferred or pension status are fully funded. The maximum starting funding level at outset is 100% of the liabilities.

Free schools typically start with no assets and liabilities. Where members do transfer from other employers in the Fund, the opening position will be set consistently with the approach used for new academies.

For an Academy, the initial contribution rate will be equal to the Academies who are part of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) pool or, if this is not applicable, that of WSCC. If requested, the Actuary can calculate an individual rate.

For a Free School, the initial contribution rate will be an individual rate calculated by the Fund Actuary.

Funding Target

The Funding Target used for Academies and Free Schools is the "ongoing funding basis".

For Academies or Free Schools nearing the end of their participation in the Fund, the Fund may use the "cessation basis" as the Funding Target.

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because Academies and Free Schools are considered long term employers and have a Government guarantee, the Fund will look for a 66% minimum likelihood that the assets held on behalf of the Academy or Free School meet (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100%) at the end of a maximum time horizon of 20 years.

Smoothing

A key principle for Academies and Free Schools is the Fund's approach to keeping contribution rates as stable as possible through "pooling". "Pooling" is a way for Academies and Free Schools in the same Multi-Academy Trust to share experience of membership movements and smoothing out the effects of costly, but relatively rare

events, such as ill health retirements or death in service by setting a combined single contribution rate.

Whilst over the longer time periods, it would be expected that the experience for an individual may even out between Academies and that each Academy in the pool will, on average, pay a fair level of contributions it should be noted that Academies who pay “pooled” contributions may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid which hides the true long-term liability, and it may take longer to reach full funding, or that in the short term the employer may be paying more than necessary to reach full funding, all other things being equal.

Due to the long-term, secure nature of Academies and Free Schools, provided there are no anticipated material events, annual increases or decreases in contribution rates will be restricted to 1%. Phasing to new rates in increments greater than 1% may be permitted in limited circumstances.

Target Rate

The Fund will target a long-term sustainable contribution rate of 15% of pay. Employers subject to the target rate may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid in the shorter term.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions (‘strain’) wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a maximum three year period, but this would be by exception.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. Wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age this will be considered as a Membership Experience item by the Fund Actuary at the next triennial valuation (e.g. the impacted employer will see a reduction in their surplus / increase in their deficit all else being equal which would then be recovered through normal employer contributions in future). However, an upfront, additional contribution (‘strain’) can be paid to the Fund by an employer if preferred.

Exit and Exit Obligations

The Fund considers an Academy or Free School to be a long term employer. However, it is important to consider arrangements when an Academy leaves the Fund, for whatever reason.

Suspension Notice

It is not anticipated that circumstances would present to make a Suspension Notice viable. However, it will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Other circumstances

In all other cases, and if the employer does not have one or more active members actively participating in the Fund at the conclusion of a Suspension Notice, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine the level of deficit or surplus in the individual employer position.

Whenever completing this the Actuary will adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects other employers in the Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future.

Therefore, on exit, the liabilities will be valued on the “cessation basis”. The calculation may include an allowance for future administration costs, reserves for retrospective changes to Fund benefits, and/or additional prudence for the risk of members living longer than anticipated.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the Academy or Free School may be permitted to make regular payments (payment plan) or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Provided the Academy or Free School meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund. The Academy will remain in the Multi-Academy pooling arrangement even when they have no active members.

Contractors

Academies should note the impact of setting up new Admission Bodies on their liabilities. It is normal for an Admission Body to be set up in the Fund as a new employer.

Following the Department for Education Academy Trust Guarantee Policy, the default for Academy contractors to be admitted into the Fund will be on a “Pass Through” basis. Under most pass through arrangements no pension fund assets or liabilities will transfer to the contractor’s portion of the Fund. The contractor’s initial contribution rate will be set based on the letting authority contribution rate on the date of admission and will be fixed for the duration of the admission, except if agreed otherwise between the letting authority and the Fund and the alternative arrangements are defined within the Admission

Agreement. When the Admission Body exits the Fund, provided that all pass through arrangements have been complied with, no exit debt or credit will be due. These bodies will be pooled with the Academy for actuarial valuation purposes.

If the Academy does not wish for the contractor to be admitted on a “Pass Through” basis, the Fund will require proof from the Academy that they have permission from the Department for Education to act as a guarantor.

APPENDIX 2C: COLLEGES

Opening Position

As these events are rare and tend to be unique in nature, there is no prescribed method for allocating an opening position. This would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Funding Target

The Funding Target used for colleges is the “ongoing funding basis”.

For colleges nearing the end of their participation in the Fund, the Fund may use the “cessation basis” as the Funding Target.

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because colleges are considered long term employers with a Government guarantee, the Fund will look for a 66% minimum likelihood that the assets held on behalf of the college (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100%) at the end of a maximum time horizon of 20 years.

Smoothing

Due to the long-term, secure nature of colleges, provided there are no anticipated material events, annual increases or decreases in contribution rates will be restricted to 1% of pay. Phasing to new rates in increments greater than 1% may be permitted in limited circumstances.

Target Rate

The Fund will target a long-term sustainable contribution rate of 15% of pay. Employers subject to the target rate may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid in the shorter term.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions (‘strain’) wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a maximum three year period, but this would be by exception.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the

employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. Wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age this will be considered as a Membership Experience item by the Fund Actuary at the next triennial valuation (e.g. the impacted employer will see a reduction in their surplus / increase in their deficit all else being equal which would then be recovered through normal employer contributions in future). However, an upfront, additional contribution ('strain') can be paid to the Fund by an employer if preferred.

Exit and Exit Obligations

The Fund considers colleges to be long term employers. However it is important to consider arrangements when a college leaves the Fund, for whatever reason.

Suspension Notice

If and when a college ceases to have active members contributing to the Fund and the individual employer position is in deficit, the Fund may issue a Suspension Notice - provided it reasonably believes that the employer is likely to have one or more active members contributing to the Fund within a three year period.

Where a Suspension Notice is issued, the college may be required to pay secondary contributions during the period of the Suspension Notice.

The Suspension Notice will be lifted if one or more active members join the college's individual position. If lifted, an individual contribution rate calculated by the Fund Actuary.

Other circumstances

In all other cases, and if the employer does not have one or more active members actively participating in the Fund at the conclusion of a Suspension Notice, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine the level of deficit or surplus in the individual employer position.

Whenever completing this the Actuary will adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects other employers in the Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future.

Therefore, on exit, the liabilities will be valued on the "cessation basis". The calculation may include an allowance for future administration costs, reserves for retrospective changes to Fund benefits, and/or additional prudence for the risk of members living longer than anticipated.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the college may be permitted to make regular payments (payment plan) or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Provided the college meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund.

Contractors

Colleges should note the impact of setting up new Admission Bodies on their liabilities. It is normal for an Admission Body to be set up in the Fund as a new employer.

Following the Department for Education Academy Trust Guarantee Policy, the default for College contractors to be admitted into the Fund will be on a “Pass Through” basis. Under most pass through arrangements no pension fund assets or liabilities will transfer to the contractor’s portion of the Fund. The contractor’s initial contribution rate will be set based on the letting authority contribution rate on the date of admission and will be fixed for the duration of the admission, except if agreed otherwise between the letting authority and the Fund and the alternative arrangements are defined within the admission agreement. When the Admission Body exits the Fund, provided that all pass through arrangements have been complied with, no exit debt or credit will be due. These bodies will be pooled with the college for actuarial valuation purposes.

If the College does not wish for the contractor to be admitted on a “Pass Through” basis, the Fund will require proof from the College that they have permission from the Department for Education to act as a guarantor.

APPENDIX 2D: CITY, TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

Opening Position

Typically, new City, Town or Parish Councils constitute new membership in the Fund (there is no past service liabilities at outset and no assets). However, this would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The new City, Town and Parish Council's initial contribution rate will be set equal to that of the City, Town and Parish Council's pool.

Funding Target

To value the City, Town and Parish Council's benefits built up to date, and future benefits, the Fund will use the "ongoing funding basis".

In the unlikely event that a City, Town or Parish Council is considered to be nearing the end of their participation, the Fund may move towards using the "cessation basis" and the City, Town or Parish Council may have an adjustment to their secondary contribution rates.

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because City, Town and Parish Councils are considered long term employers with precepting powers, the Fund will look to be at least 66% sure that the assets held on behalf of the City, Town and Parish Councils meet (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100% on the relevant funding target) over a maximum time horizon of 20 years.

Smoothing

The key principle for City, Town and Parish Councils is the Fund's approach to keeping contribution rates as stable as possible through "pooling". "Pooling" is a way to share experience of membership movements for smaller, similar, employers, and smoothing out the effects of costly, but relatively rare events, such as ill health retirements or death in service by setting a combined single contribution rate.

Whilst over longer time periods, it would be expected that the experience may even out between employers and that each employer in the pool will, on average, pay a fair level of contributions it should be noted that employers who pay "pooled" contributions may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid which hides the true long-term liability, and it may take longer to reach full funding, all other things being equal.

All City, Town and Parish Councils participate in the "City, Town and Parish Councils" pool. Changes to the pooled contribution rate may be phased in where the assessed total rate changes by 2% of pay or more.

Target Rate

The Fund will target a long-term sustainable contribution rate of 15% of pay. Employers subject to the target rate may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid in the shorter term.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a three year period, but this would be by exception.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. As a result, the preference is for employers to pay an upfront, additional contribution ('strain') wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age. However, alternatives will be considered based on the employer's covenant.

Exit and Exit Obligations

Whist City, Town or Parish Councils are considered to be long term employers, it is important to consider arrangements when a City, Town or Parish Council leaves the Fund, for whatever reason.

Suspension Notice

If and when a City, Town or Parish Council ceases to have active members contributing to the Fund but the individual employer position is in deficit the Fund may issue a Suspension Notice provided it reasonably believes that the employer is likely to have one or more active members contributing to the LGPS Fund within a three year period.

Where a Suspension Notice is issued, the City, Town or Parish Council may be required to pay secondary contributions during the period of the Suspension Notice.

The Suspension Notice will be lifted if one or more active members join the City, Town or Parish Council's individual position. If lifted, the City, Town or Parish Council will resume paying the City, Town and Parish Councils pooled rate.

Other circumstances

In all other cases, and if the employer does not have one or more active members actively participating in the Fund at the conclusion of the three-year Suspension Notice, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine the level of deficit or surplus in the individual employer position.

Whenever completing this the Actuary will adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects other employers in the Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future.

Therefore, on exit, liabilities will be valued using expected returns on government bonds only (the “cessation basis”). The calculation may include an allowance for future administration costs, reserves for retrospective changes to Fund benefits, and/or additional prudence for the risk of members living longer than anticipated.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the City, Town or Parish Council may be permitted to make regular payments (payment plan) or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Provided the City, Town or Parish Council meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund. These bodies will remain in the City, Town and Parish Councils pool after exit.

APPENDIX 2E: OTHER SCHEDULED BODIES³

Opening Position

Scheduled Bodies are listed in LGPS Regulations and therefore, it is unusual for new Scheduled Bodies to join the Fund.

As these events are rare and tend to be unique in nature, there is no prescribed method for allocating an opening position. This would be determined on a case by case basis.

For any new Scheduled Body, the initial contribution rate is likely to be an individual rate calculated by the Fund Actuary.

Funding Target

To value the Scheduled Body's benefits built up to date, and future benefits, the Fund will use the "ongoing funding basis".

Where the Scheduled Body is considered to be nearing the end of the participation, the Fund would move towards using the Fund's "cessation basis".

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because Scheduled Bodies are considered a long term employer, the Fund require a minimum 70% likelihood that the assets held on behalf of the Scheduled Body meet (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100%) over the future working lifetime of their active membership (to a maximum of 20 years).

Smoothing

Due to the long term nature of Scheduled Bodies, changes to contribution rates may be phased in where the assessed total rate changes by 2% of pay or more.

Target Rate

The Fund will target a long-term sustainable contribution rate of 15% of pay. Employers subject to a target rate may be paying more or less than they might otherwise have paid.

Security

There may be flexibility when setting employer contributions if a Scheduled Body provides added security (to the satisfaction of the Fund). Such security may include a suitable bond or guarantee from an appropriate third party or security over an asset of sufficient value.

Whatever rate is certified by the Fund Actuary in the Rates & Adjustment Certificate is the minimum employer contribution payable.

³ South Downs National Park, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Littlehampton Harbour Board

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a three year period, but this would be by exception.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. However, alternatives will be considered based on the employer's covenant.

Exit and Exit Obligations

The Fund considers Scheduled Bodies to be long term employers. However it is important to consider arrangements when a Scheduled Body leaves the Fund, for whatever reason.

Suspension Notice

If and when a Scheduled Body ceases to have active members contributing to the Fund but the individual employer position is in deficit the Fund may issue a Suspension Notice provided it reasonably believes that the employer is likely to have one or more active members contributing to the Fund within a three year period.

Where a Suspension Notice is issued, the Scheduled Body may be required to pay secondary contributions during the period of the Suspension Notice.

The Suspension Notice will be lifted if one or more active members join the Scheduled Body's individual position. If lifted, an individual contribution rate calculated by the Fund Actuary.

Other circumstances

In all other cases, and if the employer does not have one or more active members actively participating in the Fund at the conclusion of the three-year Suspension Notice, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine the level of deficit or surplus in the individual employer position.

Whenever completing this the Actuary will adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects other employers in the Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future.

Therefore, on exit, liabilities will be valued using the “cessation basis”. The calculation may include an allowance for future administration costs, reserves for retrospective changes to Fund benefits, and/or additional prudence for the risk of members living longer than anticipated.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the Scheduled Body may be permitted to make regular payments (payment plan) or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Provided the Scheduled Body meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund.

APPENDIX 2F: ADMISSION BODIES (PASS THROUGH RISK SHARING)

Opening Position

Different 'pass through' arrangements have been adopted by letting employers when commissioning services from a third party.

However, (unless advised otherwise) where there is a new Admission Body set up under a pass through arrangement the letting employer will retain responsibility for all the accrued and future benefits of the transferring employees. As a result, no assets will be transferred (so no funding position will be calculated for the Admission Body).

The contractor's initial contribution rate will be set based on the letting authority contribution rate on the date of admission and will be fixed for the duration of the admission, except if agreed otherwise between the letting authority and the Fund and the alternative arrangements are defined within the admission agreement.

Funding Target, Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because an Admission Body is not considered to have any assets or liabilities in the Fund no individual funding position will be calculated.

Smoothing

Under normal circumstances, no specific smoothing is applied to Admission Body contribution rates as the rates are dictated within the pass through arrangement.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a three year period, but this would be by exception.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the

employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. The approach taken to any “strain” costs when an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age will be in line with the arrangements for the letting authority.

Exit and Exit Obligations

When an Admission Body leaves, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine whether there is any deficit or surplus.

An Admission Body on a pass through arrangement is not normally considered to have any assets or liabilities in the Fund provided it has met the conditions of the pass through arrangement. Therefore, no exit debt or credit will normally be due provided the conditions of the pass through arrangement are met. Provided the Admission Body meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund. These bodies will be pooled with the letting employer.

APPENDIX 2G: ADMISSION BODIES (GUARANTOR)

Opening Position

Where there is a new Admission Body set up as a result of a TUPE transfer of staff from a letting employer to the contractor, the Admission Body would be set up in the Fund as a new employer with responsibility for all the accrued benefits of the transferring employees. Unless agreed otherwise, the funding level will be calculated as the market value of assets being equal to the value placed by the actuary on the benefits built up to date for the transferring employees on the ongoing funding basis (so the admission body will start fully funded on an ongoing funding basis).

The Admission Body's initial contribution rate will be set on an individual basis.

Funding Target

To value the Admission Body's benefits built up to date, and future benefits, the Fund will use the "ongoing funding basis".

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because an Admission Body is considered to be a shorter term employer and is assumed to be guaranteed by the letting authority, the Fund will use the likelihood associated with the letting authority as the minimum likelihood that assets held on behalf of the Admission Body meets (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100%) over the shorter of the future working lifetime of the active membership or the remaining contract term (to a maximum of 20 years).

Smoothing

Under normal circumstances, no smoothing is applied to Admission Body contribution rates.

Security

Security to the satisfaction of the letting authority and the Fund (such as a suitable bond, a legally-binding guarantee from an appropriate third party or security over an employer asset of sufficient value) may permit greater flexibility within the framework for setting employer contributions.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An

employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a three year period, but this would be by exception and would be limited by the time the employer is expected to be active within the Fund.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. As a result, the preference is that employers pay an upfront, additional contribution ('strain') wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age. However, alternatives will be considered based on the employer's covenant.

Exit and Exit Obligations

When an Admission Body leaves, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine whether there is any deficit or surplus.

Provided that the Admission Body's opening position was calculated as fully funded on an ongoing funding basis then the same approach will be adopted when the Actuary completes a cessation valuation.

Therefore, on exit, liabilities will be valued using the "ongoing basis". Allowances may be made for future administration costs and/or reserves for retrospective changes to scheme benefits.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the Admission Body may be permitted to make regular payments (payment plan) or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Provided the Admission Body meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund. These bodies will be pooled with the letting employer.

APPENDIX 2H: ADMISSION BODIES (NO GUARANTOR)

Opening Position

The circumstances where an employer would be admitted to the Fund without a body guaranteeing their liabilities or providing security are rare and tend to be unique in nature.

Therefore, when setting the opening position, the particular circumstances related to an Admission will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Funding Target

To value the Admission Body's benefits built up to date, and future benefits, the Fund usually use the "cessation basis".

Security to the satisfaction of the Fund (such as a suitable bond, a legally-binding guarantee from an appropriate third party or security over an employer asset of sufficient value) may permit a blended funding target between the ongoing funding basis and the "cessation basis".

Time Horizon & Likelihood

Because Admission Bodies with no guarantor are considered to be a shorter term employer, the Fund requires a minimum 75% likelihood that the assets held on behalf of the Admission Body meets (as closely as possible) the value of benefits built up (i.e. a funding position of 100%) over the shorter of the future working lifetime of the active membership or the remaining contract term (to a maximum of 20 years).

Security to the satisfaction of the Fund (such as a suitable bond, a legally-binding guarantee from an appropriate third party or security over an employer asset of sufficient value) may permit greater flexibility in terms of time horizon and likelihood.

Where an Admission Body is nearing cessation, the Fund may vary the probability of being fully funded by the end of their time horizon to 50%. This is to reduce the chances of a surplus on cessation.

Smoothing

Under normal circumstances, no smoothing is applied to Admission Body contribution rates.

Additional Costs

Early Retirement

No allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for early retirement of members. As a result, employers are required to pay an upfront, additional contributions ('strain') wherever an employee retires before reaching their earliest retirement age. An

employer can make a request to the Chief Finance Officer to pay instalments over a three year period, but this would be by exception and would be limited by the time the employer is expected to be active within the Fund.

Ill Health Early Retirement

Members are entitled to an ill health benefit if they have qualifying service and where their employment is terminated by a Scheme employer on the grounds of ill-health or infirmity of mind or body before that member reaches normal pension age. The eligibility for an ill health retirement is set out within the LGPS regulations and any decision made by the employer should be based on the recommendation of the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP).

Limited allowance has been made within employer contribution rates for ill health early retirement of members. As a result, the preference is that employers pay an upfront, additional contribution ('strain') wherever an employee retires with an unreduced pension before reaching their earliest retirement age. However, alternatives will be considered based on the employer's covenant.

Exit and Exit Obligations

When an Admission Body leaves, the Fund will request that a cessation valuation is carried out by the Fund Actuary to determine whether there is any deficit or surplus. Whenever completing this the Actuary will adopt an approach which, to the extent reasonably practicable, protects other employers in the Fund from the likelihood of any material loss emerging in future.

Therefore, on exit, liabilities will be valued using the "cessation basis" and the calculation will include an allowance for future administration costs, reserves for retrospective changes to scheme benefits, and/or additional prudence for the risk of members living longer than anticipated.

Where there is a deficit, the full amount is expected to be paid as a single lump sum. Alternatively, the Admission Body may be permitted to make regular payments (payment plan) or enter a deferred debt agreement at the discretion of the Fund.

Where there is a surplus, the Fund will determine the amount of exit credit to be paid in accordance with the Regulations and in line with this Strategy.

Provided the Admission Body meets its exit obligations, they will have no further obligation to the Fund.

APPENDIX 3: ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS

Actuarial assumptions are expectations of future experience used to place a value on future benefit payments (“the liabilities”).

Changes in assumptions will affect the measured value of future service accrual and past service liabilities, and hence the measured value of the past service deficit. However, different assumptions will not affect the actual benefits payable by the Fund in future.

The table below shows the assumptions for the 2025 valuation. The assumptions used in the 2019 and 2022 valuation have been shown for comparison. The same financial assumptions are adopted for all employers. The demographic assumptions, in particular the life expectancy assumption, reflect the different membership profiles of employers.

Assumption	31 March 2019	31 March 2022	31 March 2025
Discount rate Annual returns over the next 20 years on the Fund’s investment portfolio under 5,000 different economic scenarios. The investment return assumption has then been set such that more than 75% of the scenarios produced a return in excess of the assumption.	3.10% p.a.	3.50% p.a.	5.6% p.a.
Salary growth The same salary assumptions are applied to all employers.	2.80% p.a.	4.25% p.a.	3.8% p.a.
Pension Increases Reflects best estimate of long term CPI Under the 5,000 different economic scenarios used to model the Fund’s annual returns.	2.30% p.a.	2.70% p.a.	2.3% p.a.
50:50 option take up	1.0%	0.3%	0.7% of existing members will opt to change schemes
Withdrawals	2019	2022	As set out in the 2025 Valuation Report

Assumption	31 March 2019	31 March 2022	31 March 2025
Ill health retirements	2019	2022	As set out in the 2025 Valuation Report
Promotional salary growth	2019	2022	As set out in the 2025 Valuation Report
Cash commutation	50% of future retirements elect to exchange pension for additional tax free cash up to HMRC limits for service to 1 April 2008 (equivalent 75% for service from 1 April 2008)	All retirements commute 50% of the maximum allowed by HMRC	Retirements elect to take 50% of the maximum tax-free cash available in exchange for pension (for all tranches of benefit).
Longevity			
Baseline	Club Vita	Club Vita	Club Vita
Improvements	CMI 2018 Standard smoothing (7.0) Initial adjustment of 0.5% for males and 0.25% for females 1.50% p.a. long term improvements	CMI 2021 Standard smoothing (7.0) Initial adjustment of 0.25% 0% weighting to 2020 and 2021 data 1.75% p.a. long term improvements	CMI 2024 Standard Parameterisation with Initial adjustment of 0.25% for males and females. 1.75% pa long-term improvement
Male Pensioner	22.2 years	22.3 years	22.2 years
Male Non Pensioner	23.3 years	23.1 years	23.0 years
Female Pensioner	24.2 years	24.7 years	24.7 years
Female Non Pensioner	25.9 years	26.5 years	26.3 years

The Fund may adopt alternative actuarial bases for some employees for both funding valuations and exit valuations as set out in the main Funding Strategy Statement document and Appendices detailing the application of the Funding Strategy Statement on different employer groups.

The cessation basis sets a discount rate at a level where there is at least a 95% chance the Fund's investments will achieve it on average over the next 20 years. This results in a lower discount rate when compared to the ongoing basis where at least a 75% chance is required.

Where an employer is approaching exit, or where additional security is put in place, the fund may consider “blended” strategies that lie between the cessation basis and the ongoing basis.

In the opinion of the actuary, the current financial assumptions are consistent with the investment strategy of the Fund. The asset outperformance assumption contained in the ongoing discount rate is within a range that would be considered acceptable for funding purposes. It is also considered to be consistent with the requirement to take a “prudent longer-term view” of the funding of liabilities as required by the UK Government.

APPENDIX 4: ACTUARIAL RESULTS

The table below compares previous valuation results (all figures as at 31 March).

	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2022	2025
Assets £m	1,549	1,759	2,370	2,989	4,374	5,501	5,873
Liabilities £m	1,763	2,047	2,741	3,141	3,919	4,402	3,629
Surplus / (Deficit) £m	(214)	(288)	(371)	(152)	455	1,099	2,244
Funding Level	88%	86%	86%	95%	112%	125%	162%

APPENDIX 5: KEY RISKS, CONTROLS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Fund has an active risk management programme in place and the full risk register is reviewed regularly. The risk register includes those risks that may impact on the funding strategy and appropriate measures are in place to mitigate those risks.

Risk management is central to the Fund and measures are in place to manage the risk that future employer income streams will be able to meet future pensions liabilities by creating a reserve from which future liabilities will be met.

The risks that are most likely to impact the funding strategy are –

- **Economic risk:** the possibility that changes in inflation, interest rates, or broader economic conditions could reduce asset values or increase liabilities, affecting the Fund's long-term funding position.
- **Investment risk:** the risk of investments not performing (income) or increasing in value (growth) as forecast.
- **Liability risk:** inflation, life expectancy and other demographic changes, and interest rate and wage and salary inflation will all impact upon future liabilities.
- **Climate related risk:** the impact of the physical and transitional risks of climate change in the long term, and the responses of policy makers, on the finances of the Fund.
- **Liquidity/maturity risk:** the LGPS is going through a series of changes, each of which will impact upon the maturity profile of the Fund and have potential cash flow implications. The increased emphasis on outsourcing and other alternative models for service delivery, which result in active members leaving the Fund; transfers of responsibility between different public sector bodies; scheme changes that might lead to increased opt-outs; the implications of spending cuts – all of these will result in workforce reductions that will reduce membership, reduce contributions and prematurely increase retirements in ways that may not have been taken account of fully in previous forecasts.
- **Regulatory and compliance risk:** occupational pensions in the UK are heavily regulated, with thousands of pages of both general and LGPS-specific legislation that must be complied with.
- **Employer risk:** those risks that arise from the ever-changing mix of employers; from short-term and ceasing employers; and the potential for a shortfall in payments and/or orphaned liabilities.

- **Data quality:** Employers should comply with the fund’s pension administration strategy. Issues with the quality of data held by the Fund can have a material effect on the employer’s liabilities.
- **Governance:** the risk that weaknesses in oversight, decision-making, or internal controls could lead to poor outcomes for the Fund or hinder the effective delivery of its funding strategy.

The above risks are included within the overarching risk management framework and strategy of the Fund.

At the time of this document being prepared, there is uncertainty in relation to the LGPS. These are described below along with the approach being adopted by the Pension Fund in response:

Uncertainty	Consideration
<p>Consultation Outcomes: Several consultations or Government decisions remain outstanding which may affect the LGPS. These include the outcome of the Government’s Fair Deal II Consultation, which may introduce new classes of employer into the LGPS and the rectification of issues associated with Guaranteed Minimum Pensions. The outcome of the government’s Fit for the Future consultation and subsequent legislation is also awaited, which will impact how the Pension Committee can implement the investment strategy.</p>	<p>Liabilities on 31 March 2025 will be based on the Scheme presently in place. The Fund may revisit the Funding Strategy Statement as and when the outcomes of the above consultations (and resulting legislative changes), decisions and guidance are known and will seek wider consultation on any material changes in approach because of these changes.</p> <p>The Funding Strategy is based on the ability of the pension fund to fully implement the investment strategy determined and for that strategy to deliver the outcomes anticipated by the Fund Actuary. If this is impacted because of future legislation or guidance following the Fit for the Future consultation the funding assumptions and employer contribution rates may need to be reviewed.</p>
<p>Devolution and Combined Mayoral Authorities: Currently the County Council, District and Borough Councils participate as individual employers in the Scheme. The Government’s intention is for all areas to have a single tier of Local Government. Simultaneously, there is a potential Combined Mayoral Authority covering East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove.</p>	<p>Liabilities for employers based on the position on 31 March 2025 will be based on the arrangements presently in place.</p> <p>However, the reforms may result in mergers of current local government employers into the new model (requiring changes to contribution rates), bulk transfers of members and changes to existing contractual arrangements which impact admitted body arrangements.</p> <p>The Fund may revisit the Funding Strategy Statement as and when more information and guidance is known.</p>

Uncertainty	Consideration
<p>Virgin Media Case: In June 2023, the High Court ruled that a lack of evidence of actuarial confirmation following rule changes to contracted-out defined benefit pension schemes would render some amendments invalid and void. This ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeal. Whilst relating to Virgin Media and NTL in the initial instance, it would have implications on the wider industry, including the LGPS if the required actuarial confirmations cannot be provided.</p>	<p>Liabilities on 31 March 2025 will be based on the Scheme presently in place. The Fund may revisit the Funding Strategy Statement as and when the outcome of the case is known and any legislative changes are made.</p>

APPENDIX 6: STATUTORY REPORTING AND COMPARISON

Under Section 13(4)(c) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) must, following each actuarial valuation, report to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on whether the rate of employer contributions are set at an appropriate level to ensure the solvency of each fund in the LGPS England & Wales and to ensure the long term cost efficiency of each fund in the LGPS England & Wales. This additional oversight may have an impact on the strategy for setting contribution rates at future valuations.

SOLVENCY

For the purposes of Section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the rate of employer contributions shall be deemed to have been set at an appropriate level to ensure solvency if the rate of employer contributions is set to target a funding level for the Fund of 100% over an appropriate time period and using appropriate actuarial assumptions (where appropriateness is considered in both absolute and relative terms in comparison with other funds); and either

- employers collectively have the financial capacity to increase employer contributions, and/or the Fund is able to realise contingent assets should future circumstances require, in order to continue to target a funding level of 100%; or
- there is an appropriate plan in place should there be, or if there is expected in future to be, no or a limited number of scheme employers, or a material reduction in the capacity of fund employers to increase contributions as might be needed.

LONG TERM COST EFFICIENCY

The rate of employer contributions shall be deemed to have been set at an appropriate level to ensure long term cost efficiency if the rate of employer contributions is sufficient to make provision for the cost of current benefit accrual, with an appropriate adjustment to that rate for any surplus or deficit in the Fund. In assessing whether the above condition is met, GAD may have regard to following absolute and relative considerations.

A relative consideration is primarily concerned with comparing LGPS pension funds with other LGPS pension funds and could include the implied deficit recovery period; and the investment return required to achieve full funding after 20 years.

Absolute considerations are not primarily concerned with comparing funds and could include

- the extent to which the contributions payable are sufficient to cover the cost of current benefit accrual and the interest cost on the deficit over the current inter-valuation period;
- the extent to which contributions payable are likely to lead to a deficit arising in the future;
- the extent to which the required investment return under “relative considerations” above is less than the estimated future return being targeted by the Fund’s investment strategy;
- the extent to which contributions actually paid have been in line with the expected contributions based on the extant rates and adjustment certificate; and
- the extent to which any new deficit recovery plan can be directly reconciled with, and can be demonstrated to be a continuation of, any previous deficit recovery plan, after allowing for actual experience of the Fund.

MHCLG may assess and compare these metrics on a suitable standardised market-related basis, for example where the local funds’ actuarial bases do not make comparisons straightforward.

The Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) is required to review each fund’s valuation report and advise whether four key aims (compliance, consistency, solvency and long-term cost efficiency) are achieved. This is a backward-looking measure of the approach taken by the Pension Fund and its Actuary at the 31 March 2022 valuation. However, the Funding Strategy Statement remains materially unchanged since the analysis was completed.

Compliance	Consistency	Solvency	Long term cost efficiency
No concerns for West Sussex	No concerns for West Sussex (recommendations made to improve consistency at LGPS level)	No concerns for West Sussex	No concerns for West Sussex

The full Section 13 report for the 2022 valuation is available [here](#).

APPENDIX 7: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The requirement to maintain and publish a Funding Strategy Statement is contained in the LGPS Regulations and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has stated that the purpose of the Funding Strategy Statement is:

- “to establish a **clear and transparent fund-specific strategy** which will identify how employers’ pension liabilities are best met going forward;
- to support the regulatory framework to maintain as nearly constant employer contribution rates as possible; and
- to take a **prudent longer-term view** of funding those liabilities.”

The Statement has been written taking into consideration guidance published by the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board for England and Wales and adopted following consultation with employers.

Review	Consulted	Agreed	Effective from	Application to
2025 Actuarial Valuation	Draft – April 2025 Final – November 2025	January 2026	1 April 2026	All participating (current and future) employers

It is possible that minor amendments may be needed between valuations to reflect any regulatory changes or alterations to the way the LGPS operates (e.g. to accommodate a new class of employer). Any such amendments would be consulted upon as appropriate:

- trivial amendments would be simply notified at the next round of employer communications;
- amendments affecting only one class of employer would be consulted with those employers; and/or
- other more significant amendments would be subject to full consultation.

APPENDIX 8: RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY PARTIES

The efficient and effective operation of the Fund needs various parties to each play their part. Responsibilities of key parties are covered in other fund documents and summarised below:

ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY

- operate the Scheme in compliance with the LGPS Regulations;
- manage any potential conflicts of interest arising from its dual role as Administering Authority and a Scheme Employer;
- collect employer contributions and employee contributions, investment income and other amounts due to the Fund;
- ensure that cash is available to meet benefit payments as and when they fall due and pay the relevant benefits and entitlements that are due from the Fund;
- invest surplus monies (i.e. contributions and other income which are not immediately needed to pay benefits) in accordance with the Fund's investment strategy and LGPS Regulations;
- communicate appropriately with employers so that they fully understand their obligations to the Fund;
- take appropriate measures to safeguard the Fund against the consequences of employer default;
- manage the valuation process in consultation with the actuary;
- prepare and maintain a Funding Strategy Statement after consultation;
- provide data and information as required by GAD to carry out their Section 13 obligations;
- notify the actuary of material changes which could affect funding; and
- monitor all aspects of the Fund's performance and funding and amend the related policy document as necessary and appropriate.

INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYER

- deduct contributions from employees' pay correctly;
- pay all contributions, including their own, as determined by the actuary by the due date;
- have a policy and exercise discretions within the regulatory framework;
- make additional contributions in accordance with agreed arrangements in respect of, for example, augmentation of scheme benefits, early retirement strain;
- notify the Administering Authority promptly of all changes to its circumstances, prospects or membership which could affect future funding; and

- notify the Administering Authority of any risk sharing arrangements or other pertinent information in the context of an exit credit.

ACTUARY

- prepare valuations, including the setting of employer contribution rates. This will involve agreeing assumptions with the Administering Authority having regard to the Funding Strategy Statement and LGPS Regulations and targeting each employer's solvency appropriately;
- provide advice relating to new employers in the Fund, including the level and type of bonds or other forms of security (and the monitoring of these);
- prepare advice and calculations in connection with bulk transfers and individual benefit-related matters;
- assist the Administering Authority in considering possible changes to employer contributions between formal valuations, where circumstances suggest this may be necessary;
- provide data and information required by GAD to carry out their Section 13 obligations;
- advise on the termination of an employers' participation in the Fund; and
- fully reflect actuarial professional guidance and requirements in the advice given to the Administering Authority.

OTHER PARTIES

- investment advisers (either internal or external) should ensure the Fund's investment strategy remains appropriate and consistent with its funding strategy;
- the Fund's LGPS investment pool, investment managers, custodians and bankers should all play their part in the effective investment (and dis-investment) of Fund assets in line with the investment strategy;
- auditors should comply with their auditing standards, ensure Fund compliance with all requirements, monitor and advise on fraud detection and sign off annual reports and financial statements as required;
- governance advisers may be appointed to advise the Administering Authority on efficient processes and working methods in managing the Fund;
- legal advisers (either internal or external) should ensure the Fund's operation and management remains fully compliant with all regulations and broader local government requirements including the Administering Authority's own procedures;
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (as assisted by the Government Actuary's Department) and the Scheme Advisory Board, should work with LGPS funds to meet Section 13 requirements.